

# URGENT ACTION

## CANADIAN-IRANIAN PROFESSOR DETAINED IN TEHRAN

**Canadian-Iranian citizen Dr Homa Hoodfar, a 65-year-old professor of anthropology, was arrested on 6 June following months of questioning by the Revolutionary Guards. She is being held in Tehran's Evin Prison with no access to her family or lawyer, and likely in solitary confinement. She is a prisoner of conscience.**

Canadian-Iranian citizen **Dr Homa Hoodfar**, a prominent professor of anthropology at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, was arrested on 6 June in Tehran after being verbally summoned to the Office of the Prosecutor in Tehran's Evin Prison. She went to the prison with her lawyer who was not allowed to be present when she was taken away for questioning by officials from the Revolutionary Guards. When her lawyer requested to see Dr Homa Hoodfar, after several hours had passed, prison officials told him to go home; they told him he was no longer allowed to see her because she was a "security prisoner". All subsequent attempts by her family and lawyer to see her, including to give her personal items such as clothes and medication, have been denied by officials. Though she has not been heard from since her arrest, Amnesty International believes that she may be held in Section 2-A of Evin Prison, which is under the control of the Revolutionary Guards, as is common practice for such detainees.

Dr Homa Hoodfar, who also holds Irish citizenship, had travelled to Iran on 11 February primarily to visit her family but also to conduct historical research on women's participation in elections since 1906. On the evening of 9 March, the day before she was due to leave Iran, officers from the Counter Intelligence Unit of the Revolutionary Guards raided her home and confiscated her personal belongings, including three passports, mobile phone and computer. From the next day until her arrest on 6 June, she was called repeatedly on her house phone by officials from the Revolutionary Guards and summoned for questioning. During these interrogations, in which she was not allowed to have a lawyer present, she was asked about her work and about the emails that the authorities had found in her computer. Her interrogators also asked her questions such as "are you a feminist?" and "what is feminism?".

Dr Homa Hoodfar has a neurological condition called myasthenia gravis, which is a chronic autoimmune neuromuscular disease that affects the nerves and muscles, causing certain muscles to become weak. Her family has not been allowed to take her the medication she needs to help control the symptoms.

### **Please write immediately in Persian, English, Arabic, French, Spanish or your own language:**

- Calling on the Iranian authorities to release Dr Homa Hoodfar immediately and unconditionally, as she is a prisoner of conscience, being held solely for the peaceful exercise of her right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to ensure that she has regular access to a lawyer of her own choosing and her family; and that she is given immediate access to her medication, as well as to any medical care she may require;
- Urging the authorities to allow her to communicate with and receive visits from Canadian and Irish Consular officials.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JULY 2016 TO:**

Office of the Supreme Leader  
Ayatollah Sayed 'Ali Khamenei  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Head of the Judiciary  
Ayatollah Sadegh Larijani  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**And copies to:**  
President  
Hassan Rouhani

**Please send your appeals to the care of diplomatic representatives accredited to your country, listed below. If there is no Iranian embassy in your country, please mail the letter to the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations, 622 Third Avenue, 34th Floor, New York, NY 10017, USA. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:**

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dr Homa Hoodfar is a prominent scholar and anthropologist whose decades-long teaching and research activities relate to development, culture, gender, and electoral politics. She has written and co-authored a number of books, including: *Between Marriage and the Market: Intimate Politics and Survival in Cairo (Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies)*; *Electoral Politics: Making Quotas Work for Women*; and *Sexuality in Muslim Contexts: Restrictions and Resistance*.

Dr Homa Hoodfar suffers from myasthenia gravis, which is a rare long-term condition that causes certain muscles to become weak. It mainly affects muscles controlling eye and eyelid movement, facial expression, chewing, swallowing and speaking. The condition can also affect the muscles of the arms, legs and neck, causing mobility problems and difficulty performing physical tasks. Dr Homa Hoodfar's family told Amnesty International that her symptoms become worse when she is under stress. Dr Homa Hoodfar's family and lawyer have not been permitted to visit her since her arrest, or to deliver her medication to the prison. Amnesty International has documented several other complaints made by prisoners who have been denied essential medication in Iran's prisons. The practice contributes to new health problems or exacerbates pre-existing conditions. In some cases, the withholding of medication is apparently a form of punishment. Depriving prisoners of medication for no legitimate medical purpose, whether by intent or neglect, is contrary to the rights to health and against the prohibition of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Whenever such deprivation is intentional, and inflicts "severe pain or suffering" for such purposes as punishment, coercion or intimidation, obtaining a "confession", or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, this constitutes torture.

The denial of the right of detainees to communicate with the outside world and to receive visits is a violation of the right to a fair trial and facilitates other human rights violations in custody, including torture and other ill-treatment and enforced disappearance. Under Article 49 of Iran's new Code of Criminal Procedure, which entered into force in June 2015, the parents, spouse, children and siblings of arrested individuals are entitled to inquire about them from the local Office of the Prosecutor, the Provincial Prosecutor, and the Head of the Justice Department in each province. The Article notes that responding to the queries of the individuals mentioned in the provision is obligatory so far as "this does not infringe on the social and familial status of the detainees." Article 180 of the Executive Regulations for the Organization of State Prisons and Security and Corrective Measures stipulates that all prisoners and detainees are permitted to have contact with their relatives and acquaintances under supervision and in full compliance with Prison Regulations. Under Article 48 of Iran's new Code of Criminal Procedure, individuals who face criminal charges can request the presence of a lawyer from the start of detention and the lawyer can meet the detainee, paying due attention to the confidentiality of the investigations. The Code, however, does not guarantee the right to access an independent lawyer of one's choosing in cases such as those related to national security. In such cases, the accused individuals are limited to choosing their lawyer from a list of lawyers approved by the Head of the Judiciary.

Article 14(3) of the International Covenant Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Iran is a state party, guarantees the right of detainees to have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of their defence and to communicate with counsel of their own choosing. The UN Human Rights Council has stated: "The right to communicate with counsel requires that the accused is granted prompt access to counsel." Under international human rights law, delaying access to legal assistance may only be permitted under exceptional circumstances, which must be prescribed by law and limited to occasions when it is considered to be indispensable to maintain security and good order. However, even in such limited cases, access should not be delayed by more than 48 hours from the time of arrest or detention.

Name: Dr Homa Hoodfar

Gender m/f: f

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